

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-14 RSC-01 ISO-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 SCI-06 FEA-02

DRC-01 (ISO) W

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R 300751Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5134

INFO AEC GERMANTOWN

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4957

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, KS, IAEA

SUBJECT: KOREAN ACCESSION TO NPT

REF: (A) IAEA VIENNA 5288; (B) SEOUL 637 (NOTAL)

1. EMBOFF JULY 22 MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF NORTH KOREAN ACCESSION TO NPT (REF A) TO ACTING TREATIES DIVISION CHIEF CHANG, WHO TOOK NOTE OF INFORMATION.

2. EMBOFF TOOK OCCASION TO INQUIRE ABOUT ROK PLANS FOR RATIFICATION OF NPT. CHANG INFORMED EMBOFF THAT TREATIES DIVISION IS IN PROCESS OF POLLING THREE ROKG AGENCIES PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENTS: MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MND), ROK/CIA, AND MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. THIS SUPPOSEDLY BEING DONE IN PREPARATION FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION IN AUGUST, ALTHOUGH CHANG PERSONALLY SKEPTICAL THAT NPT WOULD BE SUBMITTED FOR RATIFICATION IN THIS
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SESSION.

3. REF B REPORTED THAT AS OF SIX MONTHS AGO MND AND ROK/CIA DID NOT FAVOR RATIFICATION, AND CHANG INDICATED IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THEIR VIEWS HAVE CHANGED. CIA-INFLUENCED KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN JULY 12 CARRIED EDITORIAL COMMENTING ON NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE RECOGNIZING ROK'S NUCLEAR ARMS DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY. EDITORIAL ASKED WHETHER ROK'S PRESENT NON-NUCLEAR POLICY REPRESENTED TRUE INTEREST OF NATION AND QUESTIONED WHETHER IT GOOD FOR ROK TO REST UNDER PROTECTION OF U.S. UMBRELLA. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT ROK CAN NO LONGER TAKE A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR CAPABILITY OUT OF HUMANITARIAN AND SENTIMENTAL CONCERNS.

4. MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT ROKG STILL INTENDS TO RATIFY NPT BUT THAT THIS IS UP TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. MINISTER ALSO SAID ROK HAS NO INTENTION TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM OF SUFFICIENT QUALITY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

5. COMMENT: AT THIS STAGE, WE HAVE NO HARD INFORMATION THAT, AT LEVELS AT WHICH DECISION MIGHT BE MADE, ROKG INTENDS DO ANYTHING MORE THAN KEEP ITS OPTIONS OPEN. WHILE MOFA SEEMS TO FAVOR ACCESSION TO NPT AND CAN APPRECIATE SHORT-TERM INCENTIVE TO RATIFY REPRESENTED BY POSSIBILITY OF NORTH KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE, WE HAVE VISCERAL FEELING, BASED ONLY ON GROWING INDEPENDENCE OF ROK ATTITUDES TOWARD DEFENSE MATTERS AND INCREASING DOUBTS ABOUT DURABILITY OF U.S. COMMITMENTS, THAT MOST SENIOR ROK DEFENSE PLANNERS DESIRE TO OBTAIN CAPABILITY EVENTUALLY TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IN MEANTIME IT PROBABLY THAT ROKG WILL CONTINUE TO JUSTIFY FAILURE TO SATISFY ON GROUNDS IT CONTRARY TO ROK NATIONAL INTEREST TO DO SO UNTIL JAPAN AND OTHER NEIGHBORING NORTHEAST ASIAN STATES HAVE RATIFIED.
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